

MINUTES OF THE CABINET HELD ON

21 January 2021

7.30 - 8.03 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council
Councillor Eugenie Harvey, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resilience and Recovery
Councillor Mike Danvers, Portfolio Holder for Resources
Councillor Tony Durcan, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity
Councillor Danny Purton, Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor Chris Vince, Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing
Councillor Nancy Watson, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Equality and Diversity
Councillor Mark Wilkinson, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Other Councillors

Councillor David Carter
Councillor Bob Davis
Councillor Tony Edwards
Councillor Michael Hardware
Councillor Andrew Johnson
Councillor Russell Perrin

Officers

Brian Keane, Chief Executive
Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning
Emma Crouch, Corporate Support Officer
Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive
Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing
Simon Hill, Head of Governance
Andrew Murray, Head of Housing
Adam Rees, Governance Support Officer

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

77. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

78. **MATTERS ARISING**

a) Housing Revenue Account, Quarter 2 Finance Report 2020/21

Councillor Ingall said that the Council had been able to purchase 32 properties through the use of retained Right to Buy receipts and therefore the Government would not claw back any unspent monies.

79. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

80. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

81. **PETITIONS**

None.

82. **FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Ingall said that the report on the Harlow Investment Fund would now be considered at Cabinet on 25 February.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan is noted.

83. **RECENT RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER, DEPUTY OR PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)**

RESOLVED that the following decision be noted.

a) Leader of the Council - 12 January 2021

84. **CORPORATE PLAN**

Cabinet received a report proposing a Corporate Plan for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

A The Corporate Plan 2020/21, attached as Appendix A to the report, is adopted.

- B** Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make minor and inconsequential amendments to the Corporate Plan.
- C** The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, prepare the proposed delivery programme for 2021-22 and therefore milestones to be monitored through regular Joint Finance and Performance Report quarterly reporting to members.
- D** The review of the Corporate Plan achievements, in future, form part of an enlarged Year End Performance report monitored by Cabinet annually.

85. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2023/24**

Cabinet received a report proposing a Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Council from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

- A** The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2023/24 (attached as appendix B to the report) is adopted.
- B** The planned Council Tax increase of 1.99 per cent for 2021/22 as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved.
- C** That an initial £155,000 is earmarked from the Governments 2021/22 Covid support funding to provide additional council tax hardship support and that up to £300,000 in total is made available should it be required in 2021/22.
- D** That a new Budget Stabilisation Fund is created as set out in this report totalling £1.363 million by utilising £1 million of the existing Severance Reserve and the balance of the 2021/22 Covid-19 funding provided by the Government.
- E** That the New Homes Bonus for 2021/22 totalling £1.079 million is contributed in full to the Discretionary Services Fund.

86. **GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2021/22**

Cabinet received a report which set out the General Fund for the Council for 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

- A** The General Fund estimates for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix A to the report, are approved.
- B** The proposed transfers between the General Fund and Earmarked Reserves, referred to in paragraph 27, Table 3 of this report and set out in Appendix C to the report, are approved.
- C** The proposed Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix E to the report, are approved.
- D** The Pay Policy Statement, as set out in Appendix G to the report, is approved.
- E** The Council's Band D Council Tax for 2021/22 is set at £288.90 representing an increase in Council Tax of 1.99 per cent for the forthcoming year.

87. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2021/22**

Cabinet received a report which provided a forecast of the outturn budget for the Council's Housing Revenue Account for the current financial year, as well as a proposed budget for 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

- A** Approves the Housing Revenue Account estimates as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- B** Approves that tenant rents are increased by CPI plus 1 per cent (1.5 per cent) with effect from 5 April 2021. This equates to an average weekly rent of £93.66 an increase of £1.38 (set out in paragraph 4 of the report).
- C** Approves that the rents and personal charges for temporary accommodation be increase by an average of 1.5 per cent with effect from 5 April 2021 (set out in paragraph 5 of the report).
- D** Approves that garage rents within the 'retain and invest' category are increased by 5 per cent with effect from 1 April 2021. This equates to an average weekly rent of £11.20, an increase of £0.53. Also approves the proportionate increases for other garages, car ports and car spaces (set out in paragraph 6 of the report).

- E** Approves that tenant service charges are increased by an average 1.5 per cent with effect from 5 April 2021 This equates to an average weekly service charge of £2.34 (see paragraphs 7 to 9 of the report and Appendix 1 attached to the report).
- F** Approves that other housing related support charges for sheltered accommodation are increased to recover full cost with effect from 5 April 2021 (see paragraphs 10 to 14 of the report and Appendix 1 attached to the report).
- G** Approves that tenant heating charges are increased by an average 2.9 per cent with effect from 5 April 2021. This equates to an average weekly heating charge of £9.50 an increase of £0.27. For tenants in sheltered accommodation this equates to an average weekly charge of £7.04 an increase £0.20 (see paragraphs 15 to 17 of the report and Appendix 1 attached to the report).
- H** Approves that the leasehold service charges are increased with effect from 1 April 2021 to ensure that all leaseholder costs are recovered (see paragraphs 18 to 22 of the report and Appendix 1 attached to the report).
- I** Approves that all other tenant charges are increased with effect from 5 April 2021 in order to recover cost (see Appendix 1 attached to the report).

88. **CAPITAL AND TREASURY REPORT 2021**

Cabinet received a report which provided a forecast of the outturn budget for the Council's Housing Revenue Account for the current financial year, as well as the proposed budget for 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

- A** The following Capital and Treasury Reports be approved:
 - i) The Capital Strategy Report (attached as Appendix A to the report).
 - ii) The Capital Programme Strategy Statement 2021/22 (attached as Appendix B to the report).
 - iii) The Investment Strategy Report 2021/22 (attached as Appendix D to the report).

iv) The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2021/22 (attached as Appendix E to the report).

B The proposed revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 (attached as Appendix C to the report) be approved for implementation with effect from 1 April 2021.

89. **CAPITAL PROGRAMMES 2020/21 - 2022/23**

The Cabinet received a report on the outturn for 2020/21 and proposed programmes for 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Ingall (seconded by Councillor Mike Danvers) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

A The Housing Capital Programme (HCP) 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

B The inclusion in the Non Housing Capital Programme (NHCP) of an additional provision of £618,000 to finance the Town Wide Paddling Pools and Staple Tye Splash Park improvements. Consequently the 2020/21 revised budget will increase by £152,000 and the 2021/22 estimates by £466,000.

C The inclusion in the NHCP a provision of £3.56 million for additional capital expenditure at the Enterprise Zone funded by grant from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Getting Building Fund. Consequently the 2020/21 revised budget will increase by £200,000 and the 2021/22 estimates by £3.36 million.

D The NHCP bids for £5.57 million additional investment in 2021/22 as set out in Table 10 of the report.

E The NHCP 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

90. **APPOINTMENT OF CABINET POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP, PANELS AND PARTNERSHIP BODIES 2020/21**

RESOLVED that appointments to the Cabinet Policy Development Working Group, Panels and Partnership Bodies 2020/21 be approved.

91. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/PARTIES AND PANELS**

None.

92. **MINUTES OF PANELS/WORKING GROUPS**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings are noted.

- a) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 22 October 2020 of Covid-19 Recovery Working Group
- b) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 19 November 2020 of Covid-19 Recovery Working Group
- c) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 26 November 2020 of Cabinet Policy Development Working Group
- d) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 17 December 2020 of Covid-19 Recovery Working Group

93. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL